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GUZ 56 Titus

*Bible Commentary:
David Guzik TEV - LVI*

David Guzik

David Guziks' Commentary On
56 Titus
Biblical Text – TEV (Good News Bible)

Greeting

Tit 1:1 Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of the elect of God and full knowledge of the truth according to godliness,

Tit 1:2 on hope of eternal life which the God who does not lie promised before the eternal times,

Tit 1:3 but revealed in its own times in a proclamation of His word, with which I was entrusted by the command of our Savior God:

Tit 1:4 to Titus, a true child according to our common faith. Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

Qualifications for Elders

Tit 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things lacking and appoint elders in every city, as I ordered you:

Tit 1:6 If anyone is blameless, husband of one wife, having faithful children, not in accusation of loose behavior, or disobedient,

Tit 1:7 (for the overseer must be blameless as a steward of God), not self-pleasing, not prone to anger, not given to wine, not a quarreler, not greedy of ill gain;

Tit 1:8 but hospitable, a lover of good, discreet, just, holy, temperate,

Tit 1:9 clinging to the faithful word according to the teaching, that he may be able both to encourage by sound doctrine and to convict the ones contradicting.

Tit 1:10 For there are indeed many disobedient men, empty talkers and mind-deluders, especially those of the circumcision,

Tit 1:11 whose mouth you must stop, who overturn whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for the sake of ill gain.

Tit 1:12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said: Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.

Tit 1:13 This testimony is true; for which cause convict them severely, that they may be sound in the faith,

Tit 1:14 not listening to Jewish myths and commandments of men, having turned away from the truth.

Tit 1:15 Truly, all things are pure to the pure, but to the ones having been defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscience has been defiled.

Tit 1:16 They profess to know God, but by their works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and worthless to every good work.

Titus 1:1-16

Titus 1 - A Mission for Titus

A. Introduction and greeting.

1. (1) The Apostle Paul, author of this letter to Titus.

Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,

a. **Paul:** In writing his own name first, Paul followed the letter-writing customs of his day. First the writer was mentioned, and then the reader, and then a greeting was given.

i. From Tit 1:5 we learn that Paul and Titus worked together in Crete, spreading the gospel and establishing churches – but Paul had to leave. Titus stayed and worked among the congregations there. Since Titus was left behind to do a difficult work, Paul wanted to instruct and encourage him – and he did so with this letter.

ii. “That St. Paul had been in Crete, though nowhere else intimated, is clear from this passage. That he could not have made such an important visit, and evangelized an island of the first consequence, without it being mentioned by his historian, Luke, had it happened during the period embraced in the Acts of the Apostles, must be evident. That the journey, therefore, must have been performed *after* the time in which St. Luke ends his history, that is, after St. Paul’s first imprisonment at Rome, seems almost certain.” (Clarke)

iii. Paul wrote this as two other Christian workers (*Zenas* and *Apollos*, mentioned in Tit 3:13) were about to go to Crete, so Paul sent this letter with them.

iv. This letter was written to Titus, but it was also written to the Christians on the island of Crete. Paul knew this letter would be publicly read among the churches on the island. So, in the structure of opening the letter, Paul took great care to tell the Christians of Crete *what* his credentials were, and *where* he stood on important issues. Paul didn’t think like a politician who often responds to what the crowd wants and to what pleases the crowd.

b. **Paul, a bondservant of God:** Of all the titles Paul could use, he first chose “**bondservant of God.**” If Paul

had a modern-day business card, that would be his title on the card.

- i. Significantly, when Paul used the term **bondservant**, he chose the ancient Greek word *doulos*. This word not only designated a *low* slave (one Greek scholar called it “the most abject, servile term in use among the Greeks for a slave”), it was also the word for a slave by *choice*.
- ii. Paul was only a **bondservant** - yet he had a high place, because He was **a bondservant of God**. It is never a low thing to be a servant of a great God.
- c. **And an apostle of Jesus Christ:** God gave Paul a special role to play among His servants. Paul’s particular call and function was as a special messenger of God - **an apostle**. Paul knew his call and purpose among the body of Christ, and so should each Christian today also know for themselves.
- d. **According to the faith:** Paul wasn’t an apostle *because* of the faith of God’s elect, but in harmony with **the faith** (in the sense of a specific, common body of doctrine) shared among **God’s elect**.
 - i. **God’s elect** are those whom He chose from before the foundation of the world to receive His salvation. We can identify **God’s elect** because they respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ and live their lives after that gospel.
- e. **The acknowledgement of the truth:** For Paul it wasn’t enough to just *know* the faith, he also had to *acknowledge* it for what it really was.
- f. **Which accords with godliness:** Paul stood in accord with godly living. All truth is God’s truth; but not all truth is really relevant to **godliness**, which promotes “God-likeness”. Much of science or psychology may be true and

admirable - but it won't save a soul from Hell. It is not **the truth which accords with godliness.**

2. (2) *Paul was an apostle in the **hope of eternal life.***

In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

a. **Eternal life:** This is the life of the Eternal God living within us. It is present now, but will be completed later.

i. "The Christian gospel does not in the first place offer men an intellectual creed or a moral code; it offers them life, the very life of God." (Barclay)

b. **Which God, who cannot lie, promised:** This eternal life is not a *wish*, but a **hope**. In this sense, **hope** is an anticipation founded not on wishful thinking, but on a promise from the **God who cannot lie.**

3. (3) *Paul was an apostle who believed in preaching the word.*

But has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;

a. **But in due time manifested His word through preaching:** Paul knew that **preaching** is the way that God's eternal work meets people today. **Preaching** is the way God's word is made evident (**manifested**).

i. **But has in due time manifested His word:** Christianity came into the world at a time when it was uniquely possible for its message to spread rapidly.

- There was a common language (Greek), which was the language of trade, business, and literature.
- There were virtually no frontiers because of the vast nature of the Roman Empire.

- Travel was comparatively easy. It was slow, but relatively safe because of the security that the Roman Empire brought to roads and sea routes.
- The world was largely at peace under the *pax Romana*.
- The world was uniquely conscious of its need for a messiah and savior. "There was never a time when the hearts of men were more open to receive the message of salvation which the Christian missionaries brought." (Barclay)

b. **Which was committed to me:** Paul knew the work of preaching was entrusted to him, but not to him only. Preaching is a work committed to all believers.

4. (4) *The reader: Titus, Paul's convert and his **true** (faithful) **son**.*

To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

a. **To Titus:** Significantly, we don't know anything about Titus from Acts. He is strangely absent from that record, though he must have been an associate of Paul during the time covered by Acts. Yet we do read about him in 2Co 2:13; 2Co 8:23; 2Co 12:18.

i. "2Co 8:18 and 2Co 12:18 both say that when Titus was sent to Corinth another brother was sent with him, described in the former passage as 'the brother who is famous among all the churches,' and commonly identified with Luke. It has been suggested that Titus was Luke's brother." (Barclay)

ii. Though we read nothing about Titus in Acts, we still know something of his character and personality.

- Titus was a **true son in our common faith** (Tit 1:4).
- Titus was a genuine *brother* to the Apostle Paul (2Co 2:13).
- Titus was a *partner and a fellow worker* with Paul (2Co 8:23).
- Titus walked *in the same spirit* as Paul (2Co 12:18).
- Titus walked *in the same steps* as Paul, in the same manner of life (2Co 12:18).
- Therefore, Titus could be a *pattern* to other believers (Tit 2:7).

iii. "He seems to have been a man of great common sense; so that, when Paul had anything difficult to be done, he sent Titus. When the collection was to be made at Corinth on behalf of the poor saints at Jerusalem, Paul sent Titus to stir the members up, and with him another brother to take charge of the contributions." (Spurgeon)

b. **A true son in our common faith:** Paul stood in support of a **common faith**. It is a **common** faith, not an isolated one. Paul was for the church and the community of all believers.

i. "It must not be restricted to a faith shared only by St. Paul and Titus; but, like [Jud 1:3], it is common to all Christians." (White)

c. **Grace, mercy, and peace:** In his greeting Paul used words typical for a greeting in the ancient world. But when Paul used these words, they were not used just as a formality because Paul knew the *source* of all **grace, mercy, and peace**. They come **from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior**.

- i. God the Father and God the Son share in the gift of salvation. "The Son has brought to us salvation from the Father, and the Father has bestowed it through the Son." (Calvin)

B. Paul's mission for Titus.

1. (5) The challenge given to Titus.

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—

a. **For this reason I left you in Crete:** After a successful evangelistic campaign on the island of Crete, there were a lot of young Christians to take care of. Paul left Titus behind to build stable churches with mature, qualified pastors for the people. This was especially needed in Crete, because the people of Crete were a wild bunch, well known as liars and lazy people. Titus had to find and train capable leaders for the Christians of the island of Crete.

- i. When a job is hard, there are basically two kinds of people. With one you say, "The job is really hard, so we can't send him." With the other you say, "The job is really hard, so we must send him." Titus seemed to be of the second kind.

- ii. **I left you in Crete** uses the same wording as Paul used in 2Ti 4:13; 2Ti 4:20 where he spoke of a cloak and an associate temporarily left behind. The idea is that he left Titus in Crete on a limited basis to solve these problems, establish godly leadership, and then move on (probably to catch up again with Paul).

b. **Set in order the things that are lacking:** This was the job Titus was given. The church needed order and leadership. Titus was commanded to **set in order** the churches, and to do it by appointing godly leaders.

i. "That phrase is a medical term; it was applied to the setting of a crooked limb." (Wiersbe) There were crooked things that had to be set straight among the congregations of Crete.

ii. If we compare the work of Titus in Crete to the work of Timothy in Ephesus (as shown by 1 and 2 Timothy), it shows there was much more **lacking** among the congregations of Crete. Paul specifically told Titus to **set in order the things that are lacking** and gave no such command to Timothy.

iii. Apparently the Ephesian congregations were ready for both elders and deacons, but only elders are mentioned in Titus.

c. **And appoint elders in every city:** Paul told Titus to **appoint elders**, who are also called bishops in Tit 1:7. The word *elder* is used broadly in the New Testament, mainly describing the maturity necessary in leaders. **Elders** and *bishops* describe pastors over congregations in different cities on Crete.

i. "The number of presbyters is not specified; the meaning is that the order of presbyters should be established all over the island." (White)

ii. **As I commanded you:** "In the phrase *as I had appointed thee* (RSV better 'as I directed you') the *I* is emphatic, bringing out not Paul's egotism, but his authoritative endorsement of the elder-system." (Guthrie)

d. **In every city:** This was a big job, because Crete was famous for having many cities.

i. "It should be carefully noted that churches cannot safely remain without the ministry of pastors, so that, wherever there is a considerable body of people, a pastor should be appointed over them. In saying that

each town should have a pastor he does not mean that none should have more than one, but only that no town should be without pastors.” (Calvin)

e. **Appoint elders:** This means Paul delegated a lot of authority to Titus. These elders were not chosen by popular vote, and they were not chosen through their own self-promotion. It was Titus’ job to look for men of the kind of character Paul would describe in the following passage and to **appoint** them as **elders** in congregations.

i. Calvin notes that this means Paul gave Titus a tremendous amount of authority, and that under Paul’s direction (and the direction of the Holy Spirit), this authority was in Titus and not in a group or a committee. “But he may seem to give Titus too much authority when he tells him to appoint ministers for all the churches. This would be almost royal power and would deprive individual churches of their right to elect and the college of pastors of their right to judge, and that would be to profane the whole administration of the Church.” (Calvin)

ii. Calvin goes on to suggest that the answer is easy – that Titus actually just approved or ratified the leaders that the congregations themselves selected. *There is not a hint of this in the text of Titus or anywhere else.* Plainly, God intended Titus as one man to have this authority and for him to use it in a godly manner.

iii. The list in the following passage means that God has specific *qualifications* for leaders in the church. Leaders should not to be chosen at random, or just because they volunteer, or because they aspire to the position, or even because they are “natural leaders.” Leaders should be chosen because they match the

qualifications listed here. It is fine if a man thinks he is "called." Yet he must also be *qualified*.

iv. The qualifications for leadership in the following passage have nothing to do with *giftedness*. Paul didn't say to Titus "Find the most gifted guys." We might say that it is easy for the Lord to grant gifts by the Holy Spirit as He wills (1Co 12:11), but developing character takes time and a real relationship with Jesus Christ.

- Going to seminary doesn't make one qualified for spiritual leadership.
- Being a good talker doesn't make one qualified for spiritual leadership.
- Natural or spiritual gifts in themselves do not qualify one for spiritual leadership.
- What one gives in money or volunteer time does not qualify them for spiritual leadership.
- What qualifies a man for spiritual leadership is *godly character* - and godly character established according to the clear criteria Paul will list.

v. However, this is not a rigid list which demands *perfection* in all areas. It provides both goals to reach for and general criteria for selection. We should take this list and ask "Does the man in question desire all these things with his whole heart? Does that desire show itself in his life?" Titus was to take the following list, find the men who *best* fit the description, and then use the list as a training guide to disciple these men.

vi. As well, these qualifications are valuable for every person - not only those who aspire to leadership. They are clear indicators of godly character and

spiritual maturity; they can give a true measure of a man.

3. (6-8) *What Titus must look for in the appointment of leaders.*

If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,

a. **If a man is blameless:** This word literally means “nothing to take hold upon.” There must be nothing in the life of the leader that others can take hold of and attack his life or the church.

i. This is a broad term for a man who lives a righteous life that can be *seen* as righteous. No one could stand up and rightfully accuse the man of grievous sin.

ii. This is important, because he was **a steward of** God’s house. The greater the master is, the greater the servants are expected to be.

b. **Husband of one wife:** The idea is of “a one-woman man.” It does not mean that a leader *must* be married. If that were the case, then both Jesus and Paul would be disqualified from leadership. Nor is it the idea that a leader could never remarry if his wife had passed away or if he were Biblically divorced. The idea is that the leader has his focus upon one woman – that being his wife.

c. **Having faithful children:** The leader must have raised his children well. His ability to lead the family of God must be first demonstrated by his ability to lead his

own children. Here the emphasis is on the idea that his children are believers also.

i. "If they remained pagans, it would throw into question the father's ability to lead others to the faith." (Hiebert) "A wise father first wins his own family to Christ and then gives them a chance to grow before he pulls up stakes and moves to bible school. We would have fewer casualties in the ministry if this policy were followed more often." (Wiersbe)

ii. "It is significant that the moral requirements of the pastor's children are more mildly expressed in 1Ti 3:4-5; 1Ti 3:12. There it is the father's power to keep order in his own house that is emphasised; here the submission of the children to discipline and restraint." (White)

iii. "The family of the elder must be such that they cannot be accused of [**dissipation**]. The Greek word is *asotia*. It is the word used in Luk 15:13 for the *riotous* living of the prodigal son. The man who is *asotos* is incapable of saving; he is wasteful and extravagant and pours out his substance on personal pleasure; he destroys his substance and in the end ruins himself." (Barclay)

d. **Not self-willed:** Basically, selfish people are disqualified from leadership. They show their **self-willed** nature in arrogance, stubbornness, and a proud self-focus.

i. "Not one who is determined to have his own way in every thing; setting up his own judgment to that of all others; expecting all to pay homage to his understanding." (Clarke)

e. **Not quick-tempered:** The **quick-tempered** are also disqualified from leadership, as are those who drink more

than is proper (**not given to wine**), the **violent**, and those **greedy for money**.

i. **Not quick-tempered**: The ancient Greek word used here (*orgilos*) actually refers more to *a settled state of anger* than the flash of an occasional bad temper. It speaks of a man who has a constant simmering anger and who nourishes his anger against others – close to the idea of a *bitter* man.

ii. **Violent**: “The Greeks themselves widened the meaning of this word to include, not only violence in action, but also violence in speech. The word came to mean one who *browbeats* his fellow-men, and it may well be that it should be so translated here.” (Barclay)

iii. **Not greedy for money**: “There are no regulations here laid down for deacons; so we are entitled to conclude that in Crete, at this time, presbyters performed the duties of every church office. Hence they should have the appropriate deaconal virtue [as in 1Ti 3:8].” (White)

f. **But hospitable**: A leader among God’s people must be a **hospitable** man, and one who loves **what is good**. Men who love the base and the sordid things of this world are not yet qualified to be leaders among God’s people.

g. **Sober-minded**: This describes the person who is *able to think clearly and with clarity*. They are not constant joke-makers but know how to deal with serious subjects in a serious way.

i. Wiersbe on **soberminded**: “This does not mean he has no sense of humor, or that he is always solemn and somber. Rather it suggests that he knows the value of things and does not cheapen the ministry or

the Gospel message by foolish behavior.” (From Wiersbe’s commentary on 1 Timothy)

ii. In the mind of the Apostle Paul, this was an *important* quality in a leader. He used this word ten times in his short letters to Timothy and Titus.

h. **Just, holy, self-controlled:** A pastor or leader in the church must be **just** (right toward men), **holy** (right towards God), **self-controlled** (right towards himself).

i. “How unfit are those to govern a church who cannot govern themselves!” (Matthew Henry)

C. What leaders in the church are supposed to do.

1. (9a) *Titus must appoint elders who will hold fast to the word of God.*

Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught,

a. **Holding fast the faithful word:** This means first that the leader must be sure of the **faithful word** for himself. When he brings the word of God to people he must bring it with confidence and authority, not mixed with theological speculation and academic doubts.

i. “There is not need of fancy words, but of strong minds, of skill in the scriptures, and of powerful thoughts.” (Chrysostom)

b. **Holding fast the faithful word:** This means also that the leader will *stick* to God’s word, instead of a focus on fads and programs for the church. If a man will not first stick *to* the word and will not then stick

with the word of God, he is not qualified for leadership in God’s church.

c. **As he has been taught:** This means that the leader has *been under* the teaching of someone else. A qualified leader doesn’t necessarily need to go to Bible College or

Seminary, but they do need to be **taught** and disciplined by *someone*, not just themselves.

2. (9b) *Titus must appoint leaders who will also use the word properly.*

That he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

a. **That he may be able... both to exhort and convict those who contradict:** A godly leader will use his solid foundation in God's word to **exhort** (encourage) those who are on the right track. He will also use it to **convict** (discourage) those who are on the wrong track, **those who contradict.**

i. "A preacher must be both soldier and shepherd. He must nourish, defend, and teach; he must have teeth in his mouth and be able to bite and fight." (Luther)

b. **By sound doctrine:** A godly leader deals with **those who contradict**, and he does it with **sound doctrine**. He doesn't do it with pompous authority and political backstabbing. He brings correction with **sound doctrine**.

i. If a leader does not have a basis in **sound doctrine** to either **exhort** or **convict** an individual, he probably shouldn't do it. Leaders need to stand on the foundation of the word.

D. Why it was important for Titus to appoint these qualified leaders.

1. (10-11) *Those who must be confronted and how to stop them.*

For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

a. **For there are many insubordinate:** The word **insubordinate** indicates someone who will not submit to God's order of authority. The ancient Greek word translated **insubordinate** is the negative form of the word *submit* - an **insubordinate** man will not submit.

i. God has established an order of authority in several different areas of life. There is an order of authority in the home, in the church, in the workplace, and in the community. God wants us to recognize the areas where He has placed an order of authority in our lives, and He wants us to submit to that authority.

ii. If there were many contentious and "problem people" among God's people in Paul's day, so soon after the apostle himself had been among them, then we should also expect that there would be such people today. There are still **many insubordinate**.

b. **Idle talkers and deceivers:** These problem people will make themselves known by their unwise speech and by their deception.

i. **Idle talkers:** "The main idea was of a worship which produced no goodness of life. These people in Crete could talk glibly but all their talk was ineffective in bringing anyone one step nearer goodness." (Barclay)

c. **Especially those of the circumcision:** Paul was particularly concerned with the effect of some Christians from a Jewish background, who thought the key to acceptance before God was keeping the Law of Moses.

i. The words **insubordinate** and **of the circumcision** taken together show that these were Christians from a Jewish background, or at least they were Christians in name. "We cannot call those

persons *unruly* on whose obedience we have no claim." (White)

ii. "They tried to persuade them that the simple story of Jesus and the Cross was not sufficient, but that, to be really wise, they needed all the subtle stories and the long genealogies and the elaborate allegories of the Rabbis. Further, they tried to teach them that grace was not enough, but that, to be really good, they needed to take upon themselves all the rules and regulations about foods and washings which were so characteristic of Judaism." (Barclay)

iii. We can understand why it might be more difficult for Christians who came from Judaism and why they might tend to be more of a source of trouble in the early churches. Christians from pagan backgrounds immediately knew that they had to reject everything about their prior understanding about the gods. Yet Christians from Judaism had to take some things and leave others, and this is often more difficult.

d. **Whose mouths must be stopped:** Titus had to train the elders he chose to simply "shut up" these problem people. They should not to be allowed to gain a hearing, because if allowed, they would **subvert whole households**.

i. **Whose mouths must be stopped:** "That does not imply that they are to be silenced by violence or persecution... it became the normal word for *to silence a person by reason*." (Barclay)

e. **Teaching things which they ought not:** There are at least three things which should not be taught among Christians. First, *false doctrine* **ought not** to be taught. Second, **insubordinate** things **ought not** to be taught. Third, *unprofitable* things **ought not** to be taught.

i. In 1Ti 1:4, Paul warned Timothy to not *give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith*. There are certain spiritual subjects that are not edifying, and are not profitable. All they do is cause speculations and arguments. When Titus found men **teaching things which they ought not**, he was supposed to stop it.

f. **For the sake of dishonest gain**: These problem people were motivated by **gain**. Paul's main idea was of dishonest financial gain, and there are many who fit that description today. However, the **dishonest gain** some seek from the gospel is emotional instead of financial. They serve for the sake of the **gain** that comes when others recognize or admire them as a spiritual leader.

2. (12-14) *Why the problem is difficult, and what to do about it.*

One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

a. **Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons**: The problem was difficult because of the general character of the **Cretans**. Even prophets among the Cretans described the island people as **liars, evil beasts**, and **lazy gluttons**, it indicates that there is a character problem.

i. If the Cretans had this basic character, it shows *why* it was so important for Titus to appoint elders to lead the church. If these congregations were left to themselves, chaos and error would dominate the churches.

ii. **A prophet of their own:** Paul did not mean that the Cretan writer he quotes here was an inspired prophet of God. But that writer did have it correct when he described the character of the people of Crete. As Paul wrote, **this testimony** - not the *entire* testimony of this writer - **is true**.

iii. "There was a Cretan prophet once who told plain truths to his countrymen. The whole line occurs, according to Jerome, in the [works] of Epimenides, a native of Cnossus in Crete." (White)

iv. "So notorious were the Cretans that the Greeks actually formed a verb *kretizein*, to *cretize*, which means *to lie and to cheat*; and they had a proverbial phrase, *kreitzein pros Kreta*, to *cretize* against a Cretan, which meant to *match lies with lies*, as diamond cuts diamond." (Barclay)

v. Paul didn't say to Titus, "Cretans are liars and cheats and gluttons, with one of the worst reputations of any group in the Roman Empire. You should look for an easier group to work with." Instead he said, "I know how bad they are. Go out and change them with the power of Jesus and for His glory."

b. **Therefore rebuke them sharply:** Because of the generally hardened character of the people of the island of Crete, they must be dealt with directly. Titus himself must **rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith**, and he must also appoint leaders who will do the same.

c. **Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth:** As mentioned before (*especially those of the circumcision, Tit 1:10*) the particular point of contention in the churches of Crete had to do with a Jewish legalism. It was not centered on God's word, but on **Jewish fables**

and the commandments of men who turn from the truth.

3. (15-16) The character of these difficult people.

To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

a. **To the pure, all things are pure:** With their attraction to Jewish legalism, the difficult people Titus had to confront seemed to believe that **nothing is pure**. They denied Christians basic and godly pleasures that were not sin.

i. Timothy had to deal with the same kind of people. Paul warned Timothy about those *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth (1Ti 4:3)*. Paul knew that if a Christian walked in the purity of the Lord, these things were **pure** to him. But to those of a legalistic mind (**those who are defiled and unbelieving**), they seemed to believe **nothing is pure**. The problem was with their **defiled and unbelieving** minds and consciences, not with the things themselves.

ii. **All things are pure:** Of course, Paul does not mean that obviously sinful things (pornography, illicit drugs, and the like) **are pure**. Paul has in mind those things which are permitted by Scripture, but forbidden by legalists in a mistaken attempt to earn favor with God.

iii. "Paul was refuting the false teaching of these legalists with reference to *foods*. They were teaching that Jewish dietary laws still applied to Christian believers." (Wiersbe)

iv. "The 'all things' refers to everything which is non-moral; such as appetite and food, desire and marriage, exchange and commerce, weariness and recreation, and so on through all the varied realm of life. To the pure all these things are pure, and they will be maintained in purity. To the impure, every one of them may be made the vehicle and occasion of impurity." (Morgan)

b. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him: These difficult people Titus had to deal with were all the more difficult because they *talked* like Christians. Their *profession* was all in order, but **in works they deny Him**. We can't just go by what a person *says*. We have to also look at how they *live*.

i. "They acted as if this Supreme Being was a mere metaphysical abstraction, out of all moral relation to human life, as if He were neither Saviour nor Judge." (J.H. Bernard, cited in White)

c. Being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work: These are strong words, but Paul means it. These difficult people probably pretended to have a higher spirituality than Titus or other godly leaders. But Paul saw right through their spiritual façade and wanted Titus - and all the Christians on Crete - to see through it also.

i. The word **abominable** has the idea of *polluted by idolatry*.

ii. **Disqualified:** The ancient Greek word is *adokimos*, and was used in many different ways:

- It was used to describe a counterfeit coin.
- It was used to describe a cowardly soldier who failed in battle.
- It was used of a candidate rejected for elected office.
- It was used of stone rejected by builders. If a stone had a bad enough flaw, it was marked with a capital A (for *adokimos*) and set aside as unfit.

Teach Sound Doctrine

Tit 2:1 But you speak things which become sound doctrine:

Tit 2:2 aged men to be temperate, sensible, discreet, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

Tit 2:3 aged women likewise in reverent behavior, not slanderers, not having been enslaved by much wine, teachers of good,

Tit 2:4 that they might train the young women to be lovers of husbands, lovers of children,

Tit 2:5 discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God may not be blasphemed,

Tit 2:6 the younger men in the same way exhort to be discreet;

Tit 2:7 having shown yourself a pattern of good works about all things in doctrine, in purity, sensibleness, incorruption,

Tit 2:8 in sound speech, not to be condemned; that he who is opposed may be ashamed, having nothing bad to say about you.

Tit 2:9 Let slaves be subject to their own masters, well-pleasing in all things, not speaking against them,

Tit 2:10 not stealing, but showing all good faith, that they may adorn the doctrine of our Savior God in all things.

Tit 2:11 For the saving grace of God has appeared to all men,

Tit 2:12 instructing us that having denied ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live discreetly and righteously and godly in the present age,

Tit 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Tit 2:14 who gave Himself on our behalf, "that He might redeem us from all iniquity" "and purify" "a people" "for His own possession," zealous of good works. Psa. 130:8; Eze. 37:23; Deut. 14:2

Tit 2:15 Speak these things and exhort and convict with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Titus 2:1-15

Titus 2 - Teach Them How to Live

"FEW portions of the New Testament excel this chapter. It may well form the creed, system of ethics, and text book of every Christian preacher. Does any man inquire what is the duty of a Gospel minister? Send him to the second chapter of the Epistle to Titus for a complete answer." (Adam Clarke)

A. How Titus must teach different groups of people in the church.

1. (1) The command to teach.

But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:

- a. **But as for you:** This sets Titus apart from the people described at the end of Titus 1. They may teach legalism and fables, but Titus was to teach **the things which are proper for sound doctrine.**

b. **Things which are proper for sound doctrine:** The idea behind this phrase has to do with *right living*, not just *right thinking*. The Living Bible translates this "Speak up for the right living that goes along with true Christianity." The New Living Translation has "Promote the kind of living that reflects right teaching."

i. We can't escape it. The Bible is a book that tells us how to *live*. It is the height of hypocrisy to say that we believe its truth if we ignore how it tells us to live our lives. We don't always like it, but we always need to hear how God expects us to *live*.

ii. Paul simply wants Titus to fulfill the command of Jesus in Mat 28:19-20 : *Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.*

2. (2) *What to teach the older men.*

That the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

a. **The older men:** Titus had some **older men** among the Christians in Crete. They had to be approached with love and wisdom, or they might easily be offended when taught by a younger man like Titus.

b. **Older men:** Paul wanted Titus to know that they must live with the maturity and wisdom that their years should give them. This means **sober, reverent, and temperate** lives. The command to teach these things means that they do not come *automatically* with age.

c. **Older men:** They must also have stability, being stable in the right things: **sound in faith, in love, in patience**. As we get older, we tend to "harden" in our ways. This is a good thing if we "harden" in the ways of **faith, love, and patience**.

i. **Patience** is the great ancient Greek word *hupomone*. It means a steadfast and active

endurance, not a passive waiting. **Older men** are not to just patiently wait around until they pass on to the next world. They are to actively endure the challenges of life; even the challenges of old age.

4. (3-4a) *How to teach the older women.*

The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women

a. **The older women likewise:** Just as Titus had to give special consideration to the *older men*, also must he keep in mind how to approach the **older women**. They have their own set of temptations and opportunities.

b. **Reverent in behavior, not slanderers:** The idea behind **behavior** includes a suggestion of dress and how a woman carries herself. The word for **slanderers** is the same word used for “devils.” When **the older women** - or anyone else, for that matter - slander and gossip, then they do the devils’ work

i. “The adjective ‘reverent’ basically means ‘suitable to a sacred office’ and conveys the image of a good priestess carrying out the duties of her office. The conduct of the older women must reveal that they regard life as sacred in all of its aspects.” (Hiebert)

c. **Not given to much wine:** This was a common failing of **older women** in Roman and Greek culture. Paul recognizes that this special challenge needs special instruction.

i. “The two prohibitions which follow, *not false accusers* and *not given to much wine*, again vividly portray the contemporary Cretan environment. The first has already been met in 1Ti 3:11 and the second in 1Ti 3:8. Evidently in Crete the liability to

these excesses was more severe than in Ephesus, especially among the women, for the verb (*doulo*) used here signifies 'bondage' (RSV 'slaves to drink'), a much stronger expression than the corresponding phrase in 1 Timothy." (Guthrie)

d. **Teachers of good things:** If the **older women** have special challenges, they also have special opportunities. God can use their wisdom and experience as they **admonish the young women**. This gives the **older women** something *positive* to live towards, instead of the *negative* things of slander and alcohol abuse.

i. "To bring out the required Christian characteristics the apostle uses a unique compound expression, *kalodidaskaloi, teachers of good things*." (Guthrie)

4. (4b-5) *How to teach the younger women.*

The young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

a. **The young women:** According to Paul's instruction, Titus was not to make it his ministry to teach the **young women** directly. Instead, he was to equip and encourage the *older women* to teach **the young women**.

i. Of course, this doesn't mean that **the young women** were barred from listening to Titus teach. It simply means that it was wrong - and dangerous - for Titus to make **the young women** a focus of his ministry. If there was a **young women** Bible Study group, Titus shouldn't teach it. The *older women* should.

b. **To love their husbands, to love their children:** Instruction for **the young women** begins with home matters. God has given them a strategic position of

influence and assistance to **their husbands** and **their children**, and they must let **love** dominate their influence and assistance.

i. Paul says that **love** for husbands and children must be *taught*. Certainly, aspects of this love are inborn. But other aspects - especially aspects that reflect the self-giving sacrifice of Jesus - must be *taught*.

c. **To be discreet, chaste, homemakers:** The **young women** must be taught these *attitudes* (**discreet, chaste**) and *skills* (**homemakers**).

d. **Good, obedient to their own husbands:** *Goodness* isn't always easy in a world that blurs the line between good and evil, so the older women need to teach the younger to be **good**. **Obedient to their own husbands** is another way of expressing the wife's duty of submission in the marriage relationship (Eph 5:22, Col 3:18).

e. **That the word of God may not be blasphemed:** This shows *how important* it is for the older women to teach these things, and for the **younger women** to learn them. When Christians don't live in a Biblical, godly manner it means that the **word of God may** be **blasphemed** among the ungodly.

i. "The practical worth of a religion is not unfairly estimated by its effects on the lives of those who profess it. If the observed effect of the Gospel were to make women worse wives, it would not commend it to the heathen." (White)

5. (6) *How to teach the younger men.*

Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded,

a. **Likewise:** This is a *linking* word. It shows that what the **young men** need to learn isn't all that different from what the younger women, the older women, and the

older men need to learn. We may need a slightly different *emphasis* depending on our station in life, but the essential message of godly living is the same.

b. **To be sober-minded:** The Living Bible translates the thought well: *Urge the young men to behave carefully, taking life seriously*. This is the only command Titus is told to emphasize to **young men**, but sometimes a difficult one for younger men.

i. **Sober-minded:** "The word is *sophron*, and it describes the man with the mind which has everything under control.... strength of mind which has learned to govern every instinct and passion until each has its proper place and no more." (Barclay)

6. (7-8) *Titus and his practical example to the young men.*

In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

a. **In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works:** Titus had to be more than a teacher, he also had to be an example. His guidance to others could not be taken seriously if he himself was not walking after the Lord.

b. **In doctrine showing integrity:** Titus had to be an example in doctrinal stability and integrity. If he wasn't comfortably settled in his understanding of the Scriptures, he wasn't ready to lead.

c. **That one who is an opponent may be ashamed:** So that your accusers will be embarrassed, having nothing to hold against you. Jesus could say to an angry mob, "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" (Joh 8:46)

- i. White on **having nothing evil to say**: "The clause means *having nothing evil to report concerning us*: not, as the English versions, *having no evil thing to say*."

7. (9-10) How to teach servants.

Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

a. **Exhort bondservants**: Titus was to teach **bondservants** about their specific duties as Christians. In the ancient world, Christians shocked the larger culture by mixing slaves and masters in the social setting of the church service. This meant that a slave might go to church and be an elder over his own master.

- i. "I do not think for a moment Paul believed that the practice of slavery ought to exist. He believed to the fullest extent that the great principles of Christianity would overthrow slavery anywhere, and the sooner they did so the better pleased would he be; but, for the time being, as it was the custom to have slaves, they must adorn the doctrine of God their Savior in the position in which they were." (Spurgeon)

b. **Obedient to their own masters**: Paul doesn't say that **bondservants** should **be obedient** to every free man, only to **their own masters**. This means that Paul recognized that **bondservants** had obligations, but only to

their own masters.

- i. **Obedient**: "The word 'obedient' was used to describe a company of soldiers as they stand at attention and salute their commander. They are

declaring as they stand at attention in front of him that they are ready to take his orders.” (Draper)

ii. At the same time, as in every arena of human submission, our obedience and submission is limited by our higher responsibility to obey God. As Peter said in Act 5:29, *We ought to obey God rather than men* when there is a conflict between the two.

c. **Not pilfering:** This type of offence was so common in the ancient world that sometimes the words *servant* and *thief* were used interchangeably. It was assumed that servants would steal from their masters in these small ways.

i. **Pilfering:** “The word signifies, not only *stealing* but *embezzling* another’s property; *keeping back a part of the price* of any commodity sold on the master’s account. In Act 5:2, we translate it, *to keep back part of the price*; the crime of which Ananias and Saphira were guilty.” (Clarke)

d. **Well pleasing in all things:** Simply, Titus must direct servants to be good workers in all ways. By their hard work and humble submission, they will **adorn the doctrine of God our Savior**.

i. **Adorn:** “It literally means to take precious jewels and arrange them so as to show their true beauty.” (Draper)

ii. In one sense the gospel doesn’t need adornment. At the same time, we can *show* the beauty of the gospel by the way we live. We often think we need better *words* to adorn the gospel. Better words are fine, but what we really need are better *lives*.

iii. Wonderfully, those who (in this context) have the ability to **adorn the doctrine of God our Savior** are **bondservants** – slaves under a master. Even one in

a low or disadvantaged station in life has the potential to beautify God's truth by the way they live.

iv. "Thus we see how 'the doctrine of God our Savior' may 'be adorned.' It is adorned when its effects on life and character are expressed in conduct.... While it is still only a theory doctrine lacks the manifestation of beauty. When, however, it is realized and manifested in human life its beauty at once appears. The value of a theory is always supremely apparent in the results it produces." (Morgan)

B. The place of grace in the Christian life.

1. (11) Saving grace.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

a. **The grace of God that brings salvation:** Grace *brings salvation*. You don't go out and "get" salvation; it comes to you and you have the opportunity to receive it.

b. **Has appeared to all men:** There is one gospel of grace for **all men**. God doesn't have a gospel of grace for some and a gospel of law or self-justification for others. **All men** find **salvation** by the **grace of God**.

i. "No rank or class or type of mankind is outside the saving influence of God's grace." (White)

ii. "There is a beauty and energy in the word *epiphaino, hath shined out*, that is rarely noted; it seems to be a metaphor taken from the *sun*. As by his rising in the east and *shining out*, he enlightens, *successively*, the whole world; so the Lord Jesus, who is called the *Sun of righteousness*, Mal 4:2, arises on the whole human race with healing in his wings." (Clarke)

iii. The light and warmth of the sun is for the whole earth; but it does not shine upon the earth all at the same time, nor in the same intensity from place to place.

2. (12-13) What grace teaches us.

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

a. **Teaching us that:** The ancient Greek word for **teaching** has in mind what a parent does for a child. It speaks of the entire training process: teaching, encouragement, correction, and discipline. Grace is a teacher in this sense.

i. " 'It teaches us' declares that grace also operates in the lives of the saved. Grounded in God's nature, grace makes ethical demands of Christians consistent with his nature. 'Teaches' pictures grace, practically personified, as instructing the believer in the things 'in accord with sound doctrine.'" (Hiebert)

ii. "He means that God's grace, should instruct us to order our lives aright. Some are quick to turn the preaching of God's mercy into an excuse for licentiousness, while carelessness keeps others from thinking about the renewal of their life. But the revelation of God's grace necessarily brings with it exhortations to a godly life." (Calvin)

iii. "Thus you see that grace has its own disciples. Are you a disciple of the grace of God? Did you ever come and submit yourself to it?" (Spurgeon)

b. **Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts:** Grace puts **ungodliness** and **worldly lusts** in our past. Now

grace teaches us to renounce those things, not only to avoid them.

i. **Denying:** "This indicates the renunciation of the Devil, of the vanity of this world, and of all the sinful lusts of the flesh." (White)

ii. One may say that in a world where we are tempted to say "Yes" to every desire and feelings, that the reality of our faith can be demonstrated by what we say *no* to, by what we are willing to deny.

iii. "The most difficult part of the training of young men is not to put the right thing into them, but to get the wrong thing out of them." (Spurgeon)

c. **We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age:** Grace teaches us how to live **in the present age**. We must **live soberly** (self-controlled) in regard to ourselves. We must live **righteously** in regard to the people around us. And we must live **godly** ("to take God seriously") in regard to our God.

i. "We are taught by that gentle school-mistress, the Grace of God, to live – soberly, as regards our personal life; righteously, in relation to others; godly, in our attitude towards God." (Meyer)

ii. Taken together, we see that the fear of the legalist – that preaching grace produces Christians indifferent to obedience – is unfounded. *Grace teaches us obedience*. "Wherever the grace of God comes effectually, it makes the loose liver deny the desires of the flesh; it causes the man who lusted after gold to conquer his greediness; it brings the proud man away from his ambitions; it trains the idler to diligence, and it sobers the wanton mind which cared only for the frivolities of life. Not only do we leave these lusts, but we deny them." (Spurgeon)

iii. The phrase **godly in the present age** is also a subtle proof against the idea of purgatory or some place of cleansing in the life to come. "Not supposing that any thing will be purified in the world to come that is not cleansed in this." (Clarke)

d. **Looking for the blessed hope:** Grace teaches us to expect and prepare for our **blessed hope**. That **hope** is not heaven or glory, but Jesus Himself, face to face, closer than ever.

i. **Looking for** indicates that Christians should live in active expectation of the return of Jesus. It should be precious for Christians to consider:

- He came the first time to save the soul of man; He will come a second time to resurrect the body.
- He came the first time to save the individual; He will come a second time to save society.
- He came the first time to a crucifixion; He will come a second time to a coronation.
- He came the first time to a tree; He will come a second time to a throne.
- He came the first time in humility; He will come a second time in glory.
- He came the first time and was judged by men; He will come a second time to judge all men.
- He came the first time and stood before Pilate; He will come a second time and Pilate will stand before Him.

ii. **Our great God:** "This is the only place in the N.T. in which *megas* is applied to the true God, although it is a constant predicate of heathen gods and goddesses, e.g., Act 19:28." (White)

iii. "The discipline of grace, according to the apostle, has three results – denying, living, looking. You see the three words before you." (Spurgeon)

3. (14) *The heart of the God of grace.*

Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.

a. **Who gave Himself for us:** Every word of this description of Jesus' work is important. Jesus **gave**, which means it was voluntary. He gave **Himself**, which means Jesus gave all He could give. And He gave Himself **for us**, which means Jesus was given as a substitute for sinful man.

b. **That He might redeem us:** Redemption means "to be bought out of slavery by the paying of a ransom." We are bought out of our slavery to sin, and purchased *for* His service.

i. **From every lawless deed:** "And we are, therefore, taught that the death of Jesus was intended, not for our forgiveness and justification merely, but for our sanctification, and our deliverance from the power of all our besetting sins." (Meyer)

ii. **His own special people:** "The word we have translated *special* (*periousios*) is interesting. It means *reserved for*; and it was specially used for that part of the spoils of a battle or a campaign which the king who had conquered set apart especially for himself." (Barclay)

c. **Zealous for good works:** We are redeemed and purchased to live with zeal. This is zeal with knowledge, and zeal for righteousness in our own life before zeal for righteousness in the lives of others.

i. "As you know, Titus was a teacher of teachers. He had to set in order the things that were wanting, and to show other preachers how they were to preach... You see how much of the Epistle is taken up with the affairs of ordinary life, matters of holy practice; so let our preaching be, and let Christian people learn to receive joyfully such instruction." (Spurgeon)

4. (15) *The messengers of grace.*

Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

a. **Speak these things:** Titus, and every one of God's messengers of grace are directed to speak, **exhort, and rebuke** - and to do it **with all authority**. God's messengers are to remember that they are messengers from a King, holding the word that brings life and turns back hell.

b. **Let no one despise you:** If Titus spoke **with all authority**, he had to back it up with his life. Titus had to live so that no one would **despise** him or his message.

i. "Since this letter would be read in the churches, the remark was apparently intended as much for the Cretans as for Titus himself." (Hiebert)

Be Ready for Every Good Work

Tit 3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready in every good work,

Tit 3:2 to speak evil of no one, not quarrelsome, but forbearing, having displayed all meekness to all men.

Tit 3:3 For we also once were senseless, disobedient, led astray, slaving for various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

Tit 3:4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

Tit 3:5 not by works in righteousness which we had done, but according to His mercy, He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

Tit 3:6 whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior;

Tit 3:7 that being justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Tit 3:8 Faithful is the Word, and concerning these things I desire you strongly to affirm that the ones believing God should take thought to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

Tit 3:9 But keep back from foolish questionings and genealogies and arguments and quarrels of law, for they are unprofitable and vain.

Tit 3:10 After the first and second warning, avoid a man of heresy,

Tit 3:11 knowing that such a one has been perverted and sins, being self-condemned.

Final Instructions and Greetings

Tit 3:12 When I shall send Artemas to you or Tychicus, hasten to come to me at Nicopolis. For I have decided to winter there.

Tit 3:13 Diligently set forward Zenas the lawyer and Apollos, that nothing be lacking to them.

Tit 3:14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they may not be without fruit.

Tit 3:15 All those with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Titus 3:1-15

Titus 3 - Remember This

A. Remember good works.

1. (1-2) *Remember to live obedient and kind lives.*

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

a. **Remind them:** In the grammar of the ancient Greek text, **remind** is in the present tense: "Go on reminding." Titus was to constantly remind the Christians under his care to show proper respect and humility towards all people, particularly those in a position of authority.

i. Knowing the sometimes difficult character of the people of Crete (as mentioned before in Tit 1:12), this command to **be subject to rulers and authorities** had special meaning.

ii. "It is perhaps significant of the difference between Crete and the province of Asia, as regards respect for law, that in 1Ti 2:1-3, reasons are given why we should pray for rulers, while here the more elementary duty of obedience is enjoined." (White)

b. **Ready for every good work:** If we simply focus on being **subject to rulers and authorities**, it is easy to make the Christian life *passive*. Titus should not allow this, and also **remind them** to be **ready for every good work**.

c. **Speak evil of no one... peaceable... gentle, showing all humility to all men:** This is a distinctively Christian kindness, coming not from simple good manners but from knowing who we are and who others are in the heart of Jesus.

2. (3) *Remember what you used to be.*

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

a. **For we ourselves were also once:** This shows *why* Titus should *remind them* of the things mentioned in Tit 3:1-2. Remembering where we once were shows us that the fallen nature is not so far from us, and we need constant reminding to stay where we should be in the Lord.

i. **For we ourselves:** "You need not suppose that it is hopeless to imagine that these wild Cretan folk can be reclaimed. We ourselves are a living proof of the power of God's grace." (White)

b. **Were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived:** Remembering this work of God builds four things in us.

- First, *gratitude* for how God changed us.
- Second, *humility* as we see that it was His work that changed us.
- Third, *kindness* to others in the same place.
- Finally, *faith* that God can change those who are still in that place.

3. (4-8) *Remember the great salvation of God.*

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

a. **But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared:** When we were in the place described by Tit 3:3, we didn't rescue ourselves. We were rescued by **the kindness and the love of God**. He reached out to us long before we reached out to Him.

b. **Not by works of righteousness which we have done:** Our salvation isn't based on any **works of righteousness which we have done**. In and of itself, response to an altar call does not save. Saying the sinner's prayer does not save. Baptism does not save. Church attendance does not save. Giving does not save. Reading the Bible does not save. Each of these may be wonderful **works of righteousness**, but they do not save us. Instead, **according to His mercy He saved us**.

c. **He saved us:** This is the essence and distinctive of the gospel. We can notice the emphasis: **of God... not by works... His mercy... He saved us... of the Holy Spirit... He poured... through Jesus... by His grace... heirs**. God is always the initiator, and we receive from Him before we give anything back.

d. **Through the washing of regeneration:** These words are commonly taken as a reference to baptism, and this passage is sometimes quoted in support of the idea of *baptismal regeneration*. Yet we cannot say that Paul specifically mentions baptism here, and the only other use of the ancient Greek word translated **washing** here is connected with the *spiritual* cleansing of the believer by the Word of God through faith (Eph 5:26).

i. "In the LXX the word, which occurs three times only, on each occasion seems to represent not the receptacle but the washing itself. This is also the sense in the only other New Testament occurrence,

Eph 5:26, 'the washing of water by the word.'" (Guthrie)

ii. "Most commentators take the washing as a reference to water baptism. But if water baptism is the means that produces the spiritual rebirth, we then have the questionable teaching of a material agency as the indispensable means for producing a spiritual result (but cf. Mat 15:1-20; Rom 2:25-29; Gal 5:6). We accept the washing as a divine inner act, although the experience is viewed as openly confessed before men in baptism." (Hiebert)

e. **Those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works:** This reminds us what we are saved *for* - **to maintain good works**. Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone. We must never put the cart of works before the horse of grace!

i. "The theology of Christianity is based on grace; the ethics of Christianity are based on gratitude." (Briscoe)

4. (9-11) *Remember to keep on course.*

But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

a. **Avoid foolish disputes:** These are some of the things which ought not to be taught warned against in Tit 1:11. These **foolish disputes** are simply **unprofitable and useless**. Instead, Titus should focus on the simple word of God.

i. **Avoid:** "The word *peristemi* literally meaning to turn oneself about so as to face the other way (cf.

2Ti 2:16 where it is used in a similar manner).”
(Guthrie)

ii. “The Jewish Rabbis spent their time building up imaginary genealogies for the characters of the Old Testament.... It is much easier to discuss theological questions than to be kind and considerate and helpful at home, or efficient and diligent and honest at work.”
(Barclay)

b. **Reject a divisive man:** Titus must take measures against those who insist on going their own way. Their self-will makes them **self-condemned**.

i. “Labour to convince him of his error; but if he will not receive instruction, if he has shut his heart against conviction, then – *burn him alive*? No, even if demonstrably a heretic in any one sense of that word, and a disturber of the peace of the church, God gives no man any other authority over him but to *shun him*. Do him no harm in body, soul, character, or substance; hold no communion with him; but leave him to God.” (Clarke)

B. Concluding thoughts.

1. (12-13) *Remember people.*

When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing.

a. **Artemas... Tychicus... Zenas... Apollos:** These personal words of Paul - common at the end of his letters - may seem insignificant, but are really very important. They communicate that Paul was a real man in a real world with real friends that he had regular contact with and care for.

i. "It is natural to suppose Artemas or Tychicus would take the place of Titus as apostolic legate in Crete. This temporary exercise of apostolic superintendence marks a stage in the development of monarchical local episcopacy in the later sense." (White)

ii. "The epistle closes with reference to Tychicus, Apollos, Artemas, and Zenas. The very mention of these names indicates the growth of the Christian movement." (Morgan)

b. **That they may lack nothing:** "The final word concerning occupation shows clearly the duty of members of the Christian Church to contribute to the support of those devoted to the work of the ministry." (Morgan)

2. (14-15) *Remember to do good deeds.*

And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful. All who *are* with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

a. **That they may not be unfruitful:** This is a recurring theme through Paul's letter to Titus. Paul was concerned that Christians might be barren and unfruitful, yet still have a "wonderfully" confident assurance of their standing in the Lord. Instead of being **unfruitful**, God's people must **learn to maintain good works** and **to meet urgent needs**.

b. **Grace be with you all:** "The closing benediction harmonizes with the opening salutation. It is a benediction of grace, the only difference being that whereas at the beginning it was addressed to Titus, at the close all those to whom he ministered were included." (Morgan)